



12¢

HOUSE of SECRETS



JUNE
NO. 54

AN ASTOUNDING
MARK MERLIN
MYSTERY!

IT--IT CAN'T BE!
THAT ALIEN WEAPON HAS NO
EFFECT ON MARK--HE'S BATTLING
AWAY THOSE FIRE-BALLS AS THOUGH
THEY WERE MATCHSTICKS!



For the
BEST



SUPERMAN



BATMAN



FLASH



GREEN
LANTERN

in COMICS
ENTERTAINMENT



AQUAMAN



BOB HOPE



JERRY LEWIS



FOX and CROW



LOIS
LANE

JIMMY
OLSEN

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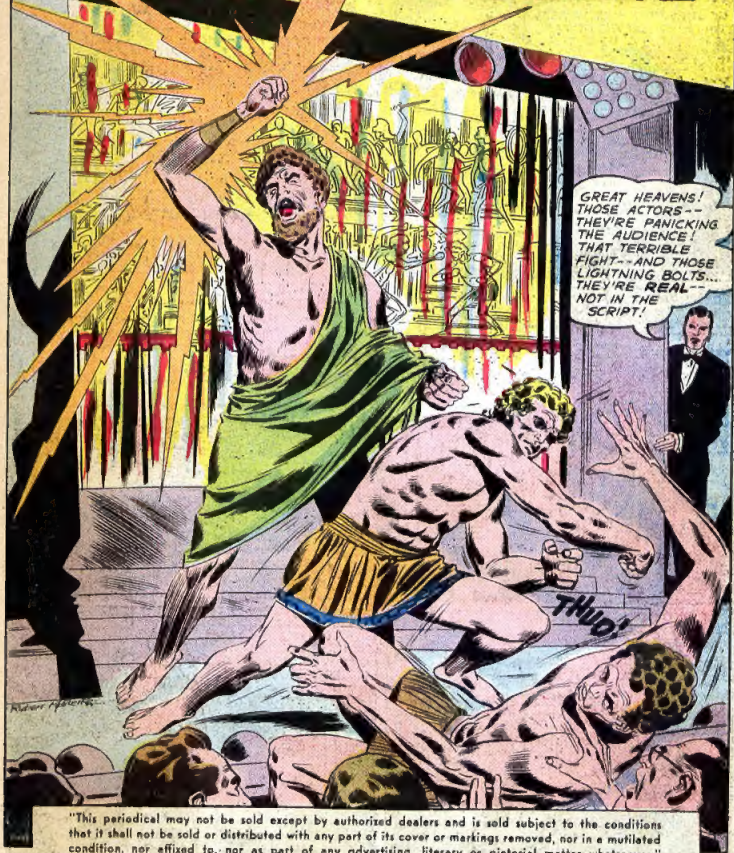


SUGAR 'N SPIKE



WOVEN INTO ITS FABRIC WERE FIGURES
OF THE ANCIENT PAST, PERFORMING THE
DEEDS WHICH MADE THEM LEGENDARY!
BUT THE CLOTH ALSO CONTAINED A
DEADLY MENACE, AS ONE MAN WAS SOON
TO LEARN, WHEN HE PURCHASED...

the TAPESTRY of DOOM



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HOUSE OF SECRETS



AS HE PREPARES FOR HIS MOST SPECTACULAR SHOW, PRODUCER L.C. MAGNUM LITTLE DREAMS OF THE STRANGE REAL-LIFE DRAMA THAT AWAITS HIM...

MY GREATEST PRODUCTION, ED-- AND YOU'RE GOING TO DIRECT IT! WAIT TILL YOU SEE THE PROPS I'VE COLLECTED!

L.C. MAGNUM
PRESENTS
"PAGEANT
OF THE
ANCIENTS"
A MILLION AND
ONE AUTHENTIC
THRILLS

EVERY HUNK OF SCENERY IS AUTHENTIC-- SHIPPED FROM EXCAVATIONS IN GREECE ITSELF! INSTEAD OF A STAGE, I'M HAVING AN ANCIENT TEMPLE RECONSTRUCTED, STONE BY STONE!

EVEN FOR YOU, L.C., THIS'LL BE A BLOCK-BUSTER SHOW!

RETURNING TO HIS OFFICE, THE DYNAMIC PRODUCER FINDS AN ODD VISITOR AWAITING HIM...

MY NAME IS SARTORIS, MR. MAGNUM-- AND I HAVE HERE A TAPESTRY REPUTED TO BE THE SAME ON WHICH THE THREE FATES OF ANTIQUITY WOVE THE DESTINIES OF MEN AND GODS! ARE YOU INTERESTED?

HA, HA... UNROLL THIS LEGENDARY RUG, AND I'LL TELL YOU!

SEE?... THERE IS THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT MOUNT OLYMPUS-- SPUN OUT BY THE FATES BEFORE THE VERY EVENTS CAME TO PASS!

HMM... OF COURSE, I DON'T BUY THE LEGEND, SARTORIS-- BUT I WILL BUY THE TAPESTRY! IT'LL MAKE A GREAT BACK DROP FOR MY SHOW! LET'S TALK PRICE!

AFTERWARD...

THE TAPESTRY HAS REAL FLAVOR, L.C., BUT WE NEED THREE ACTRESSES FOR THE PART OF THE THREE FATES!

YOU FIND 'EM FOR ME, ED... THEY'LL MAKE A GREAT ADDITION TO OUR SCRIPT!

SO THE FOLLOWING DAY...

THESE ARE OUR "THREE FATES", EH? TERRIFIC, ED... MAKE-UP AND WARDROBE DID A COLOSSAL JOB ON 'EM!

BY ZEUS, YOU WILL BE STARTLED BY OUR PERFORMANCES, SIRRAH!



HOUSE OF SECRETS

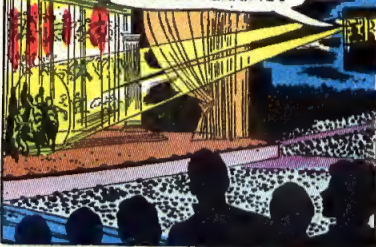


HA, HA... THEY'RE EVEN GETTING INTO THEIR CHARACTERS BEFORE REHEARSALS! WONDERFUL! WHEN WE OPEN THIS SHOW, THE NAME OF MAGNUM WILL BE BIGGER THAN BARNUM!



INDEED, ON OPENING NIGHT...

WE'VE GOT A SELLOUT! THOSE THREE WEIRD GALS, PLAYING THE FATES, ARE STARTING TO SPIN OUT L.C. MAGNUMS BIGGEST SMASH! KEEP THE SPOT ON 'EM, CHARLIE! THEY'RE TERRIFIC!



AS THE FIRST EPISODE GETS UNDERWAY...

IT'S THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS-- WHEN THE TROJAN HERO, PARIS, TRIES TO PICK THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE GODDESSES!



SUDDENLY...

HEY!... LOOK HOW THEY'VE CHANGED! IS THIS MAGNUM'S IDEA OF COMEDY?



GREAT PROSCENIUMS! THAT... THAT'S NOT IN THE SCRIPT! SWITCH THE SPOT OFF THOSE ACTRESSES, AT ONCE!

RIGHT, MR. MAGNUM!



AS A RESTLESS MURMUR SWEEPS THE HUGE CROWD...

TH--THANK GOODNESS, THEY'VE RETURNED TO NORMAL! BUT WHAT COULD'VE CAUSED THAT EFFECT? START THE NEXT ACT, WHILE I INVESTIGATE BACKSTAGE!



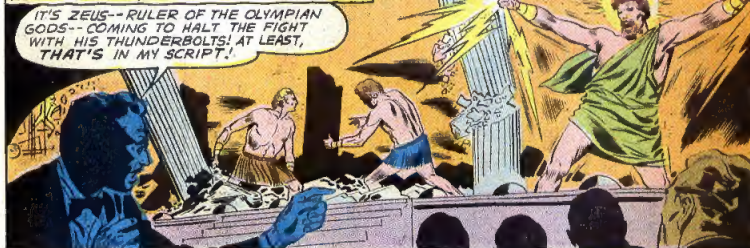
AS ACTORS BEGIN THE SECOND TABLEAU--THE BATTLE OF APOLLO AND HERCULES...



BUT WHEN THE GOLDEN CHARIOT REACHES THE STAGE...



AT THAT MOMENT, ANOTHER FIGURE EMERGES...



WAIT A MINUTE! THE ELECTRIC BOLT MACHINE -- HE'S NOT USING IT! THAT... THAT'S REAL LIGHTNING!



RUN! THOSE BOLTS CAN KILL US!





HOUSE OF SECRETS



PANDEMONIUM BREAKS OUT IN THE HOUSE THAT MAGNUM BUILT...

OH-H-H... THIS IS
TERRIBLE-- AWFUL!
THE AUDIENCE--
FLEEING IN PANIC...
I'M RUINED...
RUINED!



MOMENTS LATER, THE FRANTIC PRODUCER IS ALONE, EXCEPT FOR...

THE ACTRESSES PLAYING
THE **THREE FATES**... THEY
SEEM PLEASED WITH THIS
WHOLE SPECTACLE! THOSE
WEIRD GESTURES AT THE
STARS... WHAT CAN THIS
ALL MEAN?

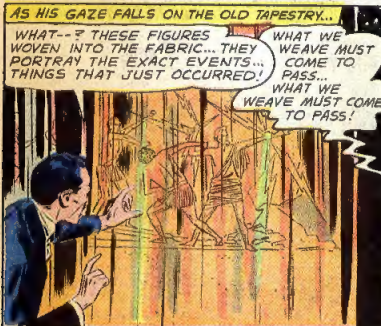


AS HIS GAZE FALLS ON THE OLD TAPESTRY...

WHAT--? THESE FIGURES
WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC... THEY
PORTRAY THE EXACT EVENTS...
THINGS THAT JUST OCCURRED!

WHAT WE
WEAVE MUST
COME TO
PASS...

WHAT WE
WEAVE MUST COME
TO PASS!



Y-YOU THERE...
WHO ARE YOU?

THE **REAL THREE FATES**...
CLOTHO, LACHESIS, AND
ATROPOS! WE HAVE
RETURNED FROM OUR
SLEEP IN LIMBO, TO PUNISH
YOU FOR THE THEFT OF THE
SACRED TAPESTRY!



NO... I **DIDN'T** STEAL IT! I **BOUGHT**
IT... I NEVER SUSPECTED IT WAS THE
REAL THING!



YOU CANNOT ESCAPE
YOUR PUNISHMENT BY
LIES! WHAT WE WEAVE
SHALL COME TO PASS!

HUH--? SOMETHING'S
COMING OVER ME...
CAN'T CONTROL
MYSELF!





SOME IMPULSE IS MAKING ME PUSH AGAINST THE GIRDERS SUPPORTING THE SET! MY STRENGTH... IT'S BECOME ENORMOUS!



THE THREE FATES--THEY'RE WEAVING THE DESTRUCTION OF MY AMPHITHEATRE INTO THE TAPESTRY... AND HAVE CURSED ME WITH THE POWER TO DESTROY IT MYSELF!



ONLY ONE CHANCE... THIS GREAT STRENGTH THE FATES HAVE GIVEN ME-- MAYBE I CAN HEAT THE GIRDER BY FRICTION, AND THWART THEM!



SURE ENOUGH, AS THE STEEL FRAMEWORK BEGINS TO GLOW FROM THE TREMENDOUS FRICTION...

BY OLYMPUS! THE SACRED TAPESTRY IS AFLAME! CEASE THY WEAVING, SISTERS! HELP ME TO SNUFF OUT THE FIRE!



AFTER DOUSING THE FIRE... PART OF THE ANCIENT PAST HAS BEEN DESTROYED! WE MUST RE-WEAVE IT AT ONCE!

THE CULPRIT HAS ESCAPED OUR SPELL FOR NOW-- BUT WHEN THIS REPAIR IS THROUGH, WE SHALL WEAVE HIS DOOM ANEW!



HOUSE OF SECRETS



MEANWHILE...

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO STOP THAT INCREDIBLE TRIO... BY FINDING SARTORIS AND MAKING HIM CONFESS THAT HE STOLE THAT TAPESTRY!

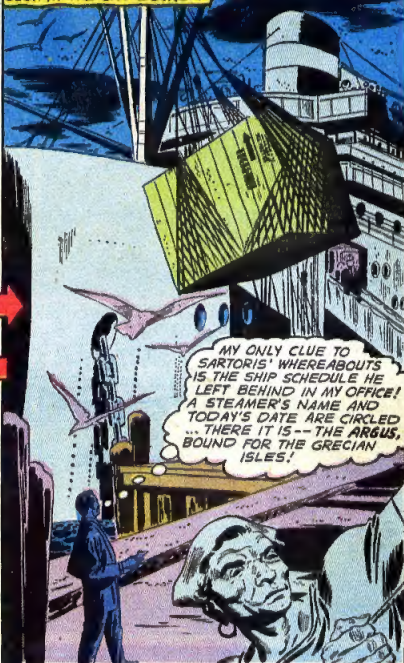


SHORTLY, ABOARD THE FREIGHTER...

MAGNUM! YOU'RE COMING WITH ME, SARTORIS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU! AND STEP ON IT!... I CAN SEE THOSE THREE FATES WEAVING MY DOOM RIGHT NOW!



SOON AT THE CITY DOCKS...



MY ONLY CLUE TO SARTORIS' WHEREABOUTS IS THE SHIP SCHEDULE HE LEFT BEHIND IN MY OFFICE! A STEAMER'S NAME AND TODAY'S DATE ARE CIRCLED... THERE IT IS -- THE ARGUS, BOUND FOR THE GRECIAN ISLES!

OVERWHELMING THE SMALLER MAN, MAGNUM SOON REACHES THE AMPHITHEATRE...

HERE IS THE REAL THIEF! HE STOLE THAT SACRED RAG! TELL THEM, SARTORIS, OR I'LL --

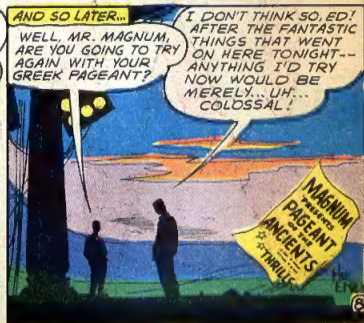
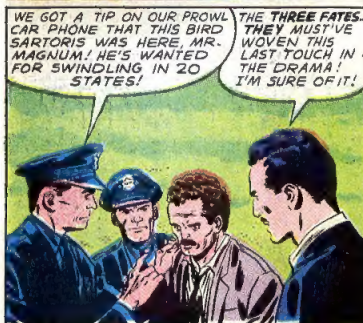
THE THREE FATES... DON'T LET THEM HARM ME, MAGNUM! I CONFESS... I TOOK THE TAPESTRY!



I FOUND IT IN A MACEDONIAN CRYPT-- AND FEARED IT MIGHT HAVE TRUE POWERS! BUT I ALSO FEARED THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY CRIME, AND SOLD IT TO BE RID OF IT!

FOR THY PUNISHMENT, MY SISTERS AND I WILL WEAVE ONCE MORE THE THREADS OF DESTINY!





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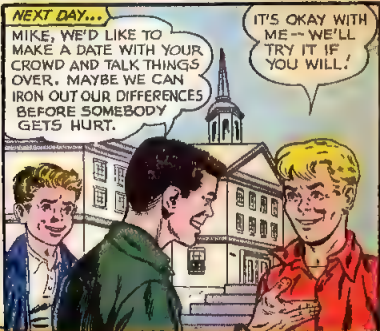
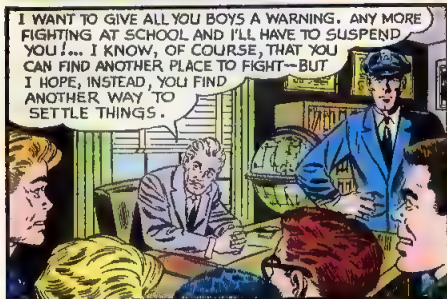
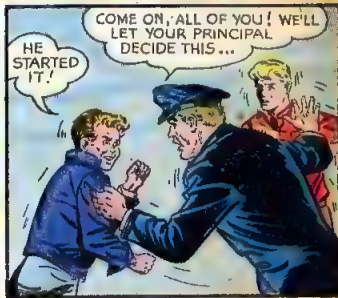
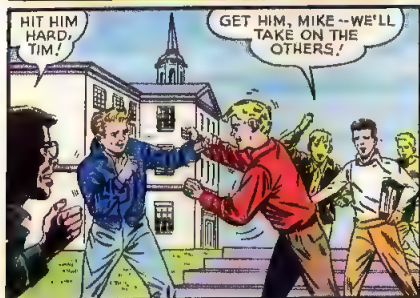
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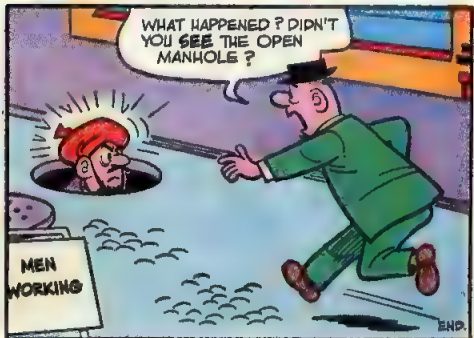
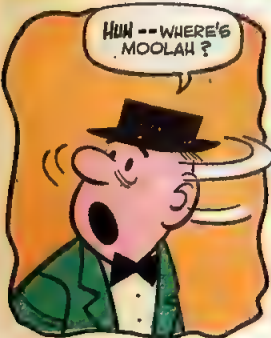
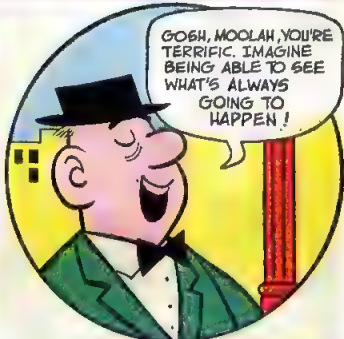
**ADMIT ONE
(FREE)
CATERPILLAR**

**ADMIT ONE
(FREE)
JET PLANE**

TIME-OUT for TALK!



WINNING A PEACE IS HARDER THAN WINNING A FIGHT. EVERYONE MUST WORK AT IT!





IT WAS A SECRET WITH GREAT POTENTIAL FOR THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND, AND THE DYING GENIUS WHO GAVE IT LIFE FOUND A FOOLPROOF SCHEME TO TRANSMIT IT TO THE LIVING! BUT THEN, THE INGENUOUS SCHEME BACKFIRED INTO THE...

RUSE OF THE THOUGHT THIEF

THAT GADGET OF YOURS ISN'T WORKING, WELLS! THAT ENERGY DISC IS CHANGING INTO STILL ANOTHER THREAT!

YES, DARROW-- A THREAT UNLEASHED BY YOUR THIEVERY!





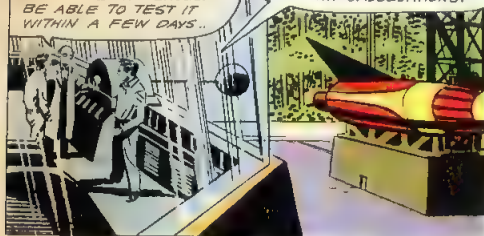
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IT ALL BEGAN WHEN VIC DARROW AND I WORKED WITH PROFESSOR LONGUS IN THAT REMOTE AREA

WELL, ED AND VIC, THE REMOTE-CONTROL ENERGIZER IS ALMOST COMPLETE. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO TEST IT WITHIN A FEW DAYS...

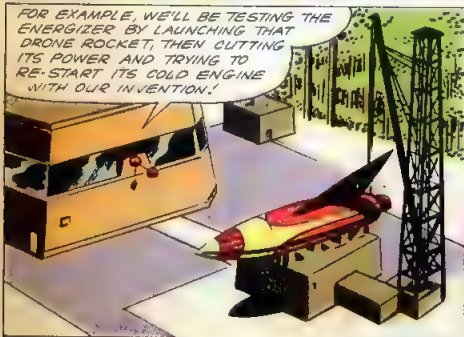
THAT'S GREAT PROFESSOR BUT SOMETHING'S MISSING, ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS!



SMART THINKING, VIC! SOMETHING IS MISSING! THE CONTROL DATA THAT WILL ENABLE THE ENERGIZER TO BE BEAMED IN ON ANY ENGINE OR MECHANICAL OBJECT THAT HAS SUFFERED A POWER FAILURE!

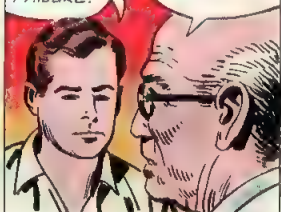


FOR EXAMPLE, WE'LL BE TESTING THE ENERGIZER BY LAUNCHING THAT DRONE ROCKET, THEN CUTTING ITS POWER AND TRYING TO RE-START ITS COLD ENGINE WITH OUR INVENTION!



IF IT WORKS -- WHAT A SAFETY DEVICE IT'LL BE! NO MORE WRECKS OR CRASHES FROM ENGINE FAILURE!

EXACTLY ED... AND BOTH OF YOU HAVE HELPED GREATLY TO MAKE IT A REALITY!



SUDDENLY THE BRILLIANT OLD MAN STAGGERED AND PALED, AS...

PROFESSOR LONGUS!... WHAT'S WRONG?

I...UH...HELP ME TO A CHAIR, ED! I MUST TELL BOTH OF YOU! I...I HAVE AN INCURABLE MALADY!



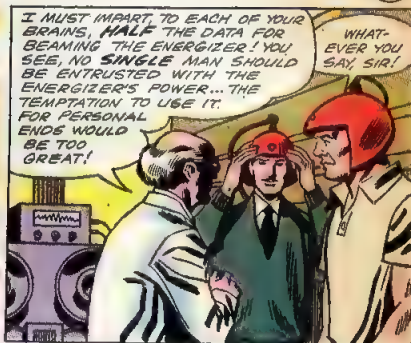
MY TIME IS SHORT--VERY SHORT! BEFORE THE WORLD SCIENTIFIC DELEGATION ARRIVES HERE NEXT WEEK TO INSPECT OUR WORK...I'LL BE GONE!

NO PROFESSOR! THERE **MUST** BE HOPE!





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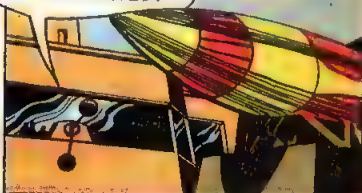


VIC AND I SUBMITTED TO THE CONDITIONER, WHICH IMPLANTED ONE HALF OF THE DATA IN EACH OF OUR MINDS BY ELECTRONIC IMPULSES BELOW THE LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

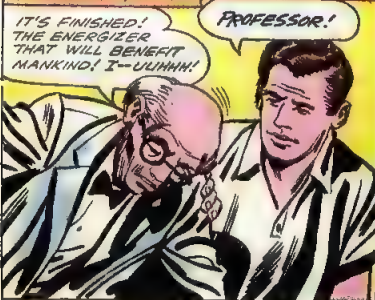


AFTER THE SUPER-SECRET DATA HAD BEEN "WRITTEN" ON OUR BRAINS...

WHEN THE WORLD SCIENTISTS ARRIVE, THEY CAN USE THE CONDITIONER TO SCAN YOUR BRAINS AND OBTAIN THE **COMPLETE** CONTROL DATA! NOW, BACK TO WORK! WE MUST FINISH QUICKLY... MY TIME IS LIMITED!



IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS WE LABORED UNCEASINGLY, UNTIL...



OUR BRILLIANT MENTOR HAD REACHED THE END OF HIS STRENGTH...





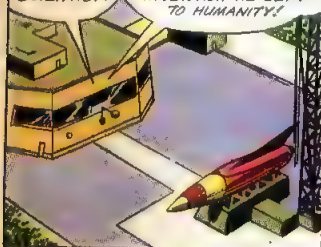
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IN ANOTHER MOMENT, VIC AND I WERE LEFT TO CARRY ON ALONE...

HE... HE WAS A GREAT SCIENTIST!

YES-- AND NOW, **WE** MUST TEST THE INVENTION HE LEFT TO HUMANITY!



BUT NEXT DAY, AS VIC AND I PREPARED THE ENERGIZER FOR TESTING...

YOU REALIZE, VIC-- WE CAN'T REALLY PERFORM THE TEST UNTIL THE WORLD SCIENTISTS ARRIVE AND SCAN OUR BRAINS FOR THE BEAMING DATA!

I REALIZE IT ONLY TOO WELL, OLD COLLEAGUE...



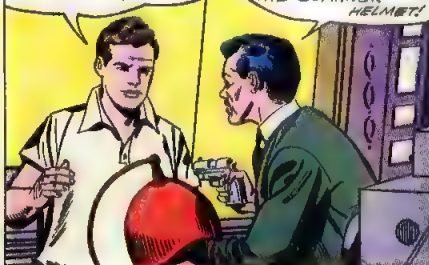
VIC! WHAT... WHAT'S THAT GUN FOR?

TO MAKE YOU SUBMIT TO THE BRAIN SCANNER, ED--SO I CAN OBTAIN THE BEAMING DATA **BEFORE** THE SCIENTISTS ARRIVE! THEN I WILL CONTROL THE ENERGIZER...**I ALONE!**



NO, VIC! THE ENERGIZER IS FOR MANKIND--NOT FOR PERSONAL GREED OR AMBITION!

SKIP THE NOBLE SCIENTIST LECTURE, ED--AND PUT ON THE SCANNER-HELMET!



I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO HAVE MY BRAIN PICKED OF ONE HALF THE DATA PROFESSOR LONGUS HAD ENTRUSTED TO IT...

VIC'S STEALING THE THOUGHTS OF THE PROFESSOR FOR HIS OWN USE! HE'S NOTHING BUT A--A DOWNRIGHT CRIMINAL!



THEN, AFTER SCANNING HIS OWN BRAIN FOR THE OTHER HALF OF THE BEAMING DATA...

NOW, OLD COLLEAGUE, I'LL LOCK YOU IN THIS LAB ROOM UNTIL I'M READY TO TEST THE ENERGIZER TOMORROW!

HE'S GOTTEN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE PROFESSOR'S INVENTION, AND I'M HELPLESS TO STOP HIM!



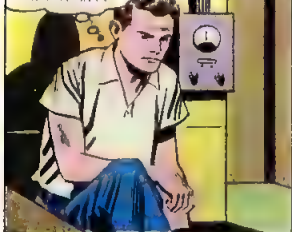


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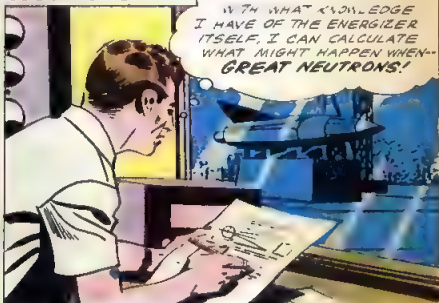
BUT THAT NIGHT, AS I BROODED
IN THE LOCKED LAB...

WAIT! I JUST REMEMBERED
SOMETHING... SOMETHING
THAT COULD BE ALL
IMPORTANT!



VIC HAD STOLEN MY HALF OF THE DATA-- BUT NOT MY
SCIENTIFIC ABILITY...

WITH WHAT KNOWLEDGE
I HAVE OF THE ENERGIZER
ITSELF, I CAN CALCULATE
WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN WHEN--
GREAT NEUTRONS!



MY CALCULATIONS, IF CORRECT, MADE
MY HAIR STAND ON END...

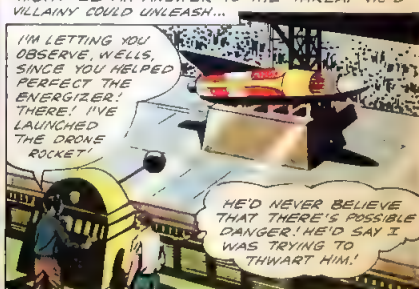
I'VE GOT TO DEVISE
SOMETHING TO MEET
THIS... AND QUICKLY!
THERE ISN'T MUCH
TIME!



WHEN DAY CAME, I HAD RIGGED WHAT I HOPED
MIGHT BE AN ANSWER TO THE THREAT VIC'S
VILLAINY COULD UNLEASH...

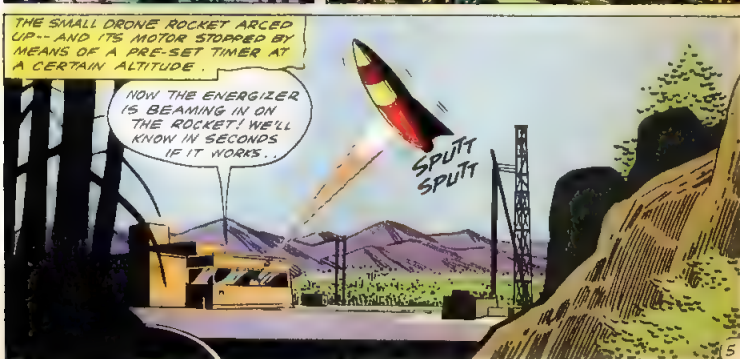
I'M LETTING YOU
OBSERVE, WELLS,
SINCE YOU HELPED
PERFECT THE
ENERGIZER!
THERE! I'VE
LAUNCHED
THE DRONE
ROCKET!

HE'D NEVER BELIEVE
THAT THERE'S POSSIBLE
DANGER! HE'D SAY I
WAS TRYING TO
THWART HIM!



THE SMALL DRONE ROCKET ARCED
UP-- AND ITS MOTOR STOPPED BY
MEANS OF A PRE-SET TIMER AT
A CERTAIN ALTITUDE.

NOW THE ENERGIZER
IS BEAMING IN ON
THE ROCKET! WE'LL
KNOW IN SECONDS
IF IT WORKS...



SPUTT
SPUTT



HOUSE OF SECRETS



RIVETED WITH TENSION, I WATCHED V.C. ACTIVATE THE ENERGIZER -- AND, A MOMENT LATER

THE ROCKET--IT'S SPURTING AHEAD AGAIN! ITS ENGINE HAS BEEN RE-ENERGIZED! THE INVENTION WORKS.



BUT, NEXT INSTANT...

YIII!
WHAT HAPPENED?

WHUMPF



SUDDENLY...

GREAT ATOMS!
WHAT ARE THEY?

SOME--SOME
SORT OF WHIRLING
ENERGY FORMS!
IT'S HAPPENED
JUST WHAT I
FIGURED!



I, I DIDN'T
EXPECT THIS!
I'LL SHUT OFF
THE ENERGIZER!

CRASH



BUT EVEN AFTER HE FLIPPED THE CUT-OFF SWITCH

NOTHING HAPPENED
THOSE WERD THINGS
ARE STILL BOMBARDING
THE LAB.

TAKE COVER,
DARROW! I'M
GOING TO TRY
TO NEUTRALIZE
THEM WITH THIS
ROTOR I BUILT!



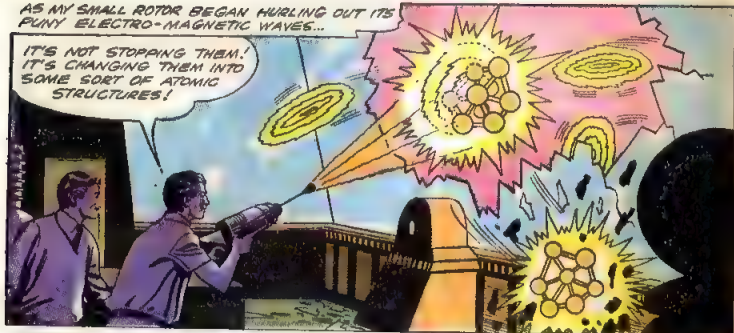


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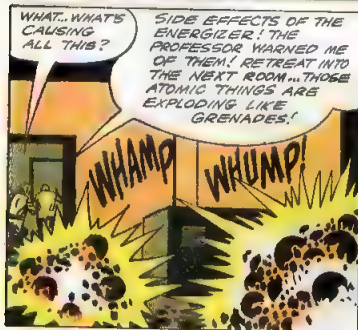
AS MY SMALL ROTOR BEGAN HURLING OUT ITS
PUNY ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVES...

IT'S NOT STOPPING THEM!
IT'S CHANGING THEM INTO
SOME SORT OF ATOMIC
STRUCTURES!



WHAT...WHAT'S
CAUSING
ALL THIS?

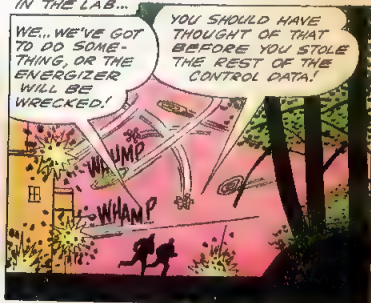
SIDE EFFECTS OF THE
ENERGIZER! THE
PROFESSOR WARNED ME
OF THEM! RETREAT INTO
THE NEXT ROOM...THOSE
ATOMIC THINGS ARE
EXPLODING LIKE
GRENADES!



BUT THERE WAS NO SAFETY ANYWHERE
IN THE LAB...

WE...WE'VE GOT
TO DO SOME-
THING, OR THE
ENERGIZER
WILL BE
WRECKED!

YOU SHOULD HAVE
THOUGHT OF THAT
BEFORE YOU STOLE
THE REST OF THE
CONTROL DATA!



NOW THOSE ENERGY
STRUCTURES HAVE
CHANGED AGAIN--
TO SPIKY BUNDLES!

THE
ENERGIZER--
IT'S SMASHED!
ALL THE
PROFESSOR'S
GREAT WORK--
RUINED!



BUT THE CHAIN REACTION THAT
WAS STARTED HAD TO BE
STOPPED...

WELLS! WHERE
ARE YOU GOING?

THERE'S ONE
LAST THING
I'VE GOT
TO TRY!



SOMEHOW, I MANAGED TO MAKE IT TO THE LAB ROOM I'D BEEN LOCKED IN...

THIS MAGNETO-ABSORBER HAS BEEN IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE BOMBARDMENT!

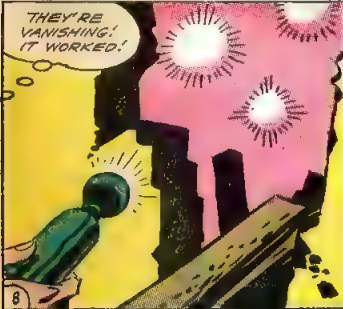


ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE CONSERVATION OF ENERGY, THIS GADGET SHOULD HAVE ABSORBED PLENTY OF THE EXCESS POWER THOSE BUNDLES GAVE OFF WHEN THEY CHANGED FORM!



BUT WAS IT ENOUGH TO CANCEL OUT THOSE RAMPAGING THREATS?

THEY'RE VANISHING! IT WORKED!



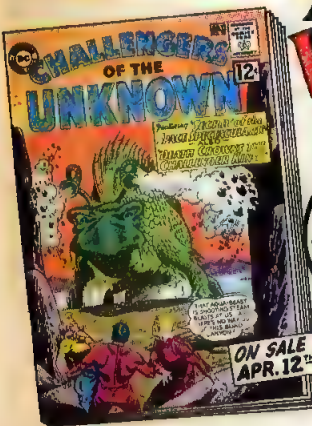
AND SO...

THE ENERGIZER'S GONE! BUT... BUT WHY DIDN'T I KNOW ABOUT THOSE SIDE EFFECTS?

YOU STOLE THE PROFESSOR'S THOUGHTS, DARROW-- EXCEPT FOR THE ONE THAT MIGHT HAVE WARNED YOU! LUCKILY, I REMEMBERED IT IN TIME! THE SCIENTIST DELEGATION'S ARRIVING... I'LL LET THEM FIGURE OUT A FIT PUNISHMENT FOR YOU!



The End



For The VERY BEST



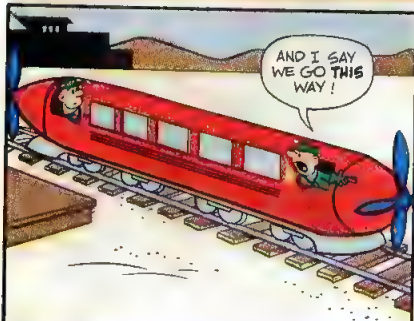
in COMICS READING



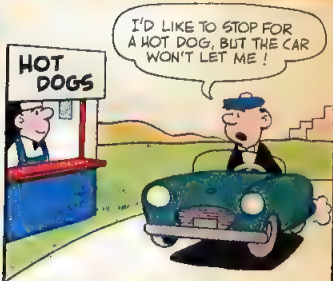
NOW ON SALE

ON SALE APR. 12TH

FROM THE INVENTORS' WORKBENCH



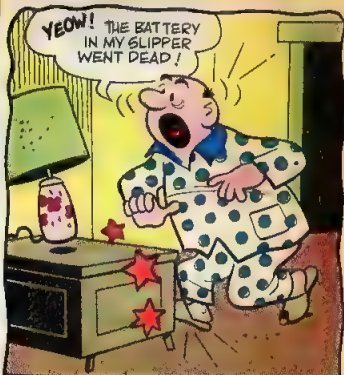
A LOCOMOTIVE MANUFACTURER WILL OFFER A PASSENGER TRAIN PROPELLED BY AN AIRPLANE ENGINE AT EACH END. FOR SHORT TRIPS, THE COMPANY SAYS, THE TRAIN WILL MAKE BETTER TIME THAN AIRPLANES, BUSES OR AUTOMOBILES.



A PATENT WAS RECENTLY GIVEN TO A MANUFACTURER FOR AN AUTOMATIC AUTO PILOT. MAGNETIC EQUIPMENT UNDER THE CAR DETECTS THE STEEL RODS THAT ARE REQUIRED UNDER MODERN HIGHWAYS. THE PILOT COULD RELIEVE THE HUMAN DRIVER OF CONSTANT ATTENTION TO THE WHEEL.

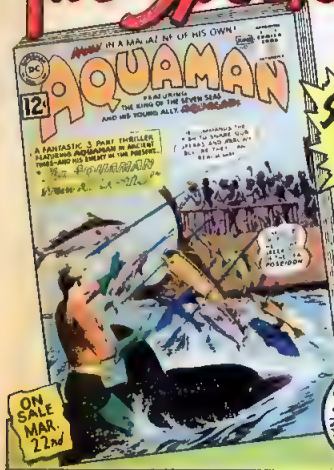


IN COLOGNE, GERMANY, SKI POLES WITH A BUTTON ON THE HANDLE TO WORK A HORN, WAS DISPLAYED FOR THE FIRST TIME.



TWO SOUTH CAROLINA MEN HAVE PATENTED A SHOE-LAMP THAT CAN BE TURNED ON BY THE BIG TOE. THE INVENTORS CLAIM THIS WILL ELIMINATE PEOPLE STUMBLING OVER FURNITURE AT NIGHT.

Two Spectacular Heroes!



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Startling
3-PART
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The Day the Earth Stops Spinning

CAN you imagine our days and our nights lasting 25 times longer than they do?

Some day it will happen. And although some astronomers like British Astronomer-Royal Sir Harold Spencer believe that the slowing down of our earth's spin is largely due to the movement of surface material over the globe, most scientists blame the moon.

But before we can understand the arguments, we must first understand why the earth spins at all.

According to one theory, billions of years ago when the earth was first formed, its natural momentum sent it into a spin. Because the earth spins freely in airless space, there is no friction to make it stop. Under normal circumstances, consequently, it could be expected to continue spinning until the very end of time.

But an accident occurred. At the time, the earth was spinning at a fantastic rate of speed achieving a complete rotation on its axis every four hours. In short, it was spinning at one-sixth its present rate, and the days and nights lasted two hours each.

So great was the centrifugal force of this hectic axis speed that great chunks of earth were thrown off. Most of these pieces fell back like meteorites and were smashed on the ground, or burned on the way down. Some were flung far enough to become lost in space, and may have been attracted into the sun. One large fragment was hurled out at just the proper speed to fall into orbit. This eventually came to be known as our moon.

At once, the moon began to have its effect upon the earth. In addition to the long-known fact that tidal friction caused mainly by the moon is slowing the earth down, scientists have recently discovered an inconsistency in the spinning speed. The earth, they noted, speeds up every fall, and slows down every spring. Sometimes, it slows down and speeds up for no apparent reason at all. But the moon is the chief villain in the slowing-down process.

This is often hard to grasp, since the moon is a quarter of a million miles away, but a simple glance at the sea shore as the tides rise and fall proves the fantastic bond between earth and moon.

If it were not for the water friction, the moon would produce two tides a day, 12 hours apart—when the moon is directly above, and when it is directly below. But the friction of the water over the ocean bottom and along shallow shores delays the formation of the tides. Consequently, the tides lag behind the moon for several hours. It is this lag which gives the moon a chance to use its gravitational force to slow down our rotation.

This is exactly how it happens. The moon's gravitation tugs away at three things: the earth itself, the tidal bulge on the near side of the earth, and the tidal bulge on the far side.

This action has been going on since the moon first began to orbit the earth. The gradual rotation was slowed down from once every four hours to once every 24 hours. The same process reciprocally slowed down the rotation of the moon around the earth, thereby driving the moon farther away until today a quarter of a million miles separate the two bodies, and the moon takes nearly 30 days to circle the earth.

Eventually, as this process continues, with the earth turning on its axis in the same length of time as the moon circles around it, both movements will be slightly less than 50 of our present days.

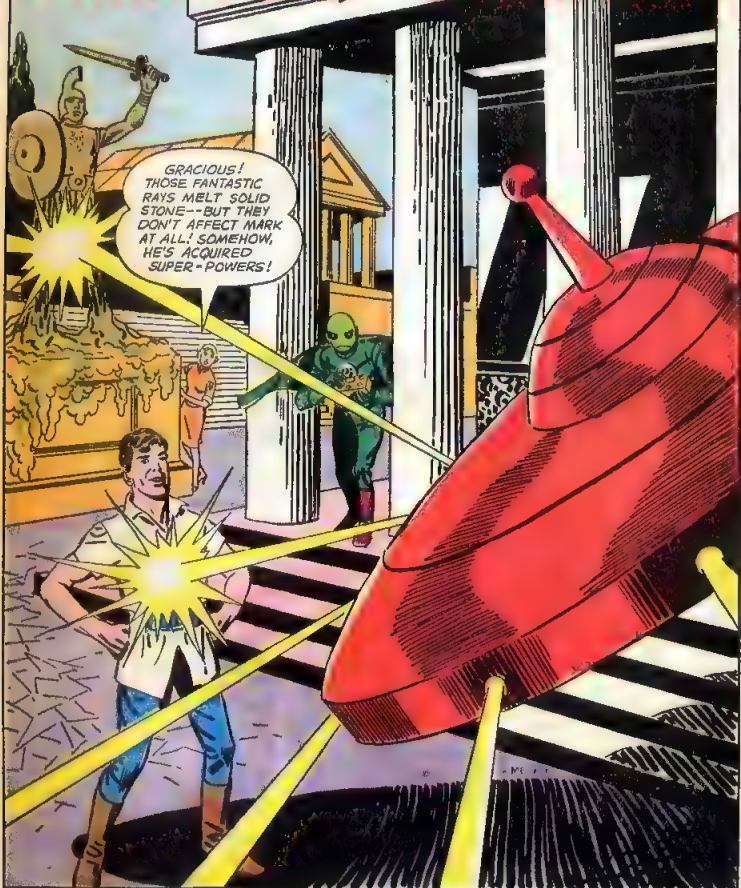
When that happens the earth will always turn the same face to the far more distant moon, and instead of the tides sweeping over our planet's surface they will remain in two places—directly below the moon and at a point directly opposite on the other side.

When will all this happen? Astronomers can't answer with any accuracy yet, but they predict it won't happen until the earth is at least twice its present age.



NO HUMAN BEING ON EARTH COULD WITHSTAND THE DEADLY BLASTS FROM THE ALIEN WEAPONS... YET, MARK MERLIN, FAR-FAMED SLEUTH OF THE SUPERNATURAL, WAS IMMUNE TO THE FANTASTIC FIREPOWER! NO WONDER, THAT, HE BECAME A...

VOLUNTEER FOR DISASTER

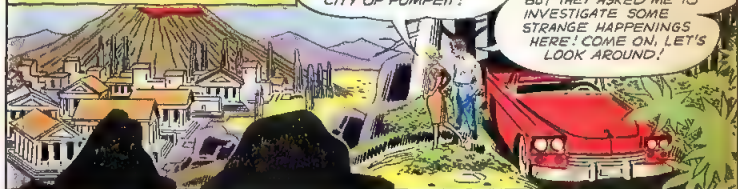


GRACIOUS!
THOSE FANTASTIC
RAYS MELT SOLID
STONE--BUT THEY
DON'T AFFECT MARK
AT ALL! SOMEHOW,
HE'S ACQUIRED
SUPER-POWERS!

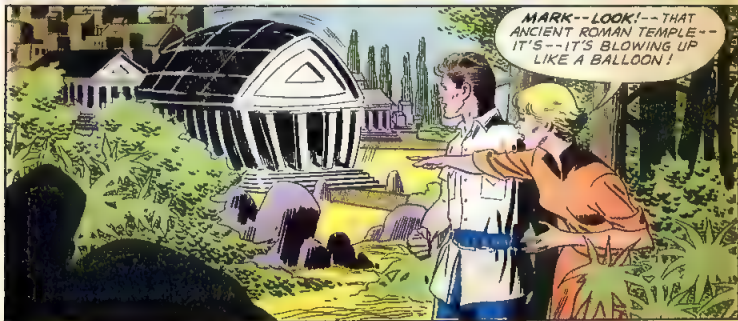
ONE DAY, AS MARK MERLIN AND HIS PRETTY ASSISTANT, ELSA, ARRIVE AT THEIR DESTINATION...

WHY--THE MOVIE PEOPLE CONSTRUCTED AN EXACT REPLICA OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF POMPEII!

YES--THEY'RE GOING TO START FILMING A BIG SPECTACULAR NEXT MONTH-- BUT THEY ASKED ME TO INVESTIGATE SOME STRANGE HAPPENINGS HERE! COME ON, LET'S LOOK AROUND!



MARK--LOOK!--THAT ANCIENT ROMAN TEMPLE-- IT'S--IT'S BLOWING UP LIKE A BALLOON!

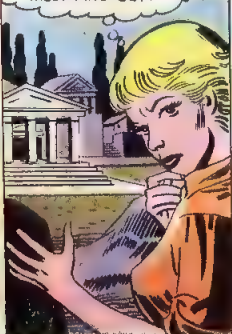


AND IT BURST LIKE ONE! YOU STAY PUT, WHILE I TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT CAUSED THAT!



BUT, AFTER WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR SOME TIME...

NO SIGN OF MARK YET... MAYBE SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO HIM! I--I MUST FIND OUT!



BUT BEFORE SHE CAN TAKE A SINGLE STEP...

GOODNESS! AN--AN ALIEN-- FIRING A WEAPON!

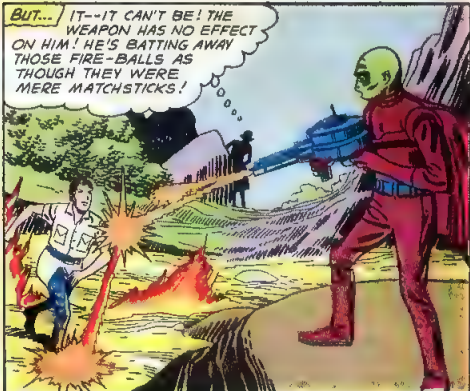


ONE FRIGHTENING SURPRISE LEADS TO ANOTHER AS SHE SEES...

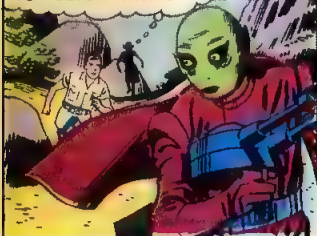
MARK--! HE'S RUNNING AHEAD-- RIGHT INTO THE DANGER AREA! HE'LL BE KILLED



BUT... IT--IT CAN'T BE! THE WEAPON HAS NO EFFECT ON HIM! HE'S BATTLING AWAY THOSE FIRE-BALLS AS THOUGH THEY WERE MERE MATCHSTICKS!



THE ALIEN'S RUNNING BACK TOWARD THE CITY-- WITH MARK PURSUING HIM! I'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THEM!



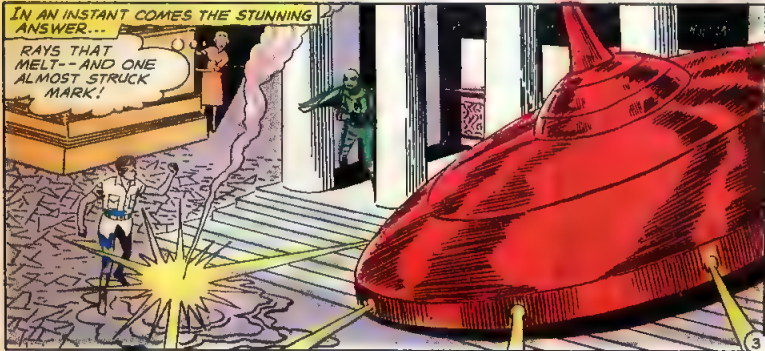
BUT ANOTHER THREAT AWAITS MARK AS THEY ENTER THE MOCK CITY...

A SECOND ALIEN-- SENDING UP A STRANGE DISC! WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?



IN AN INSTANT COMES THE STUNNING ANSWER...

RAYS THAT MELT-- AND ONE ALMOST STRUCK MARK!



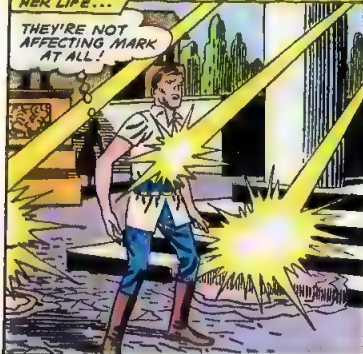


HOUSE OF SECRETS



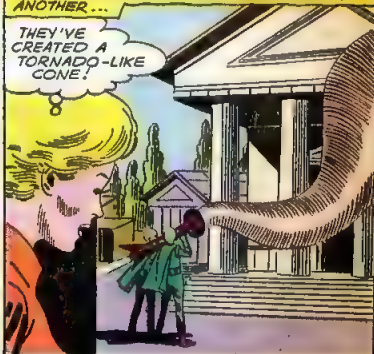
AND ONCE AGAIN SHE GETS THE SHOCK OF HER LIFE...

THEY'RE NOT AFFECTING MARK AT ALL!

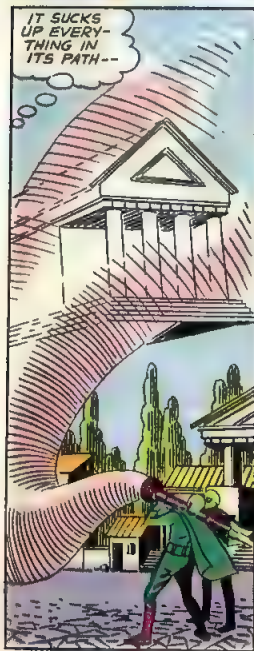


BUT ONE MENACE IS QUICKLY REPLACED BY ANOTHER...

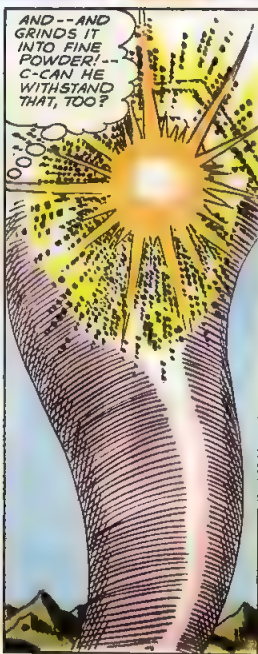
THEY'VE CREATED A TORNADO-LIKE CONE!



IT SUCKS UP EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH--



AND--AND GRINDS IT INTO FINE POWDER!-- C-CAN HE WITHSTAND THAT, TOO?



THE QUESTION HAS HARDLY FORMED IN HER MIND WHEN THE TREMENDOUS FORCE OVERWHELMS MARK...

HE--HE WASN'T HARMED IN THE LEAST! NOW I KNOW--MARK HAS ACQUIRED SUPER-POWERS! BUT HOW--AND WHERE?



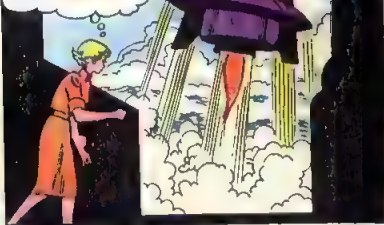
THE ALIENS, TOO, SHARE ELSA'S BELIEF, FOR AS MARK PURSUES THEM...

THEY'RE RACING BACK TO THEIR SPACESHIP-- WITH MARK HOT ON THEIR HEELS!



THE AIR VIBRATES AS POWERFUL, UNSEEN MOTORS SPRING TO LIFE, AND SOON...

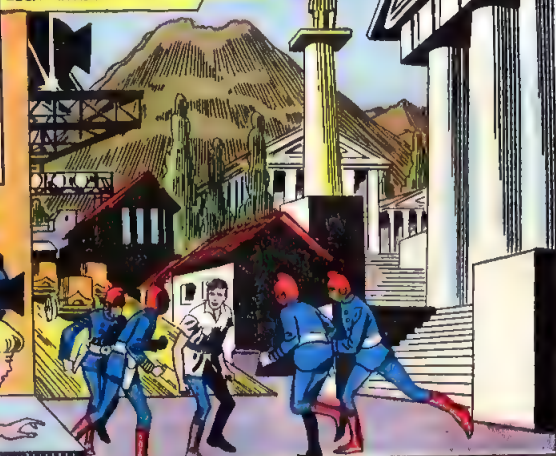
THERE IT GOES! NOW MAYBE MARK WILL TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!



HE'S GONE! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!



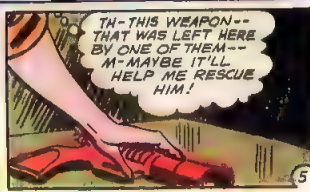
THROUGH THE 'ANCIENT' STREETS ELSA RACES UNTIL...



GREAT HEAVENS! MORE ALIENS-- AND THIS TIME THEY'VE CAPTURED MARK!



TH-- THIS WEAPON-- THAT WAS LEFT HERE BY ONE OF THEM-- M-- MAYBE IT'LL HELP ME RESCUE HIM!





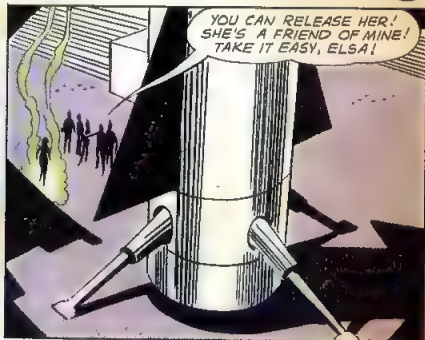
HOUSE OF SECRETS



BUT HER ARRIVAL HAS BEEN SPOTTED, AND EVEN AS SHE RAISES THE GUN...



I-- I CAN'T MOVE!



YOU CAN RELEASE HER! SHE'S A FRIEND OF MINE! TAKE IT EASY, ELSA!

MARK-- WILL YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?

GLADLY! THOSE OTHER ALIENS WERE SLUVIAN MARAUDERS, WHO DEVELOPED POWERFUL NEW WEAPONS! THEY PICKED THIS PLACE TO TEST THEM BECAUSE IT WAS REMOTE AND SEEMED DESERTED!



IF THEIR NEW WEAPONS WERE OKAY, THEY INTENDED TO RETURN WITH THEIR MAIN FORCE -- AND INVADE EARTH!

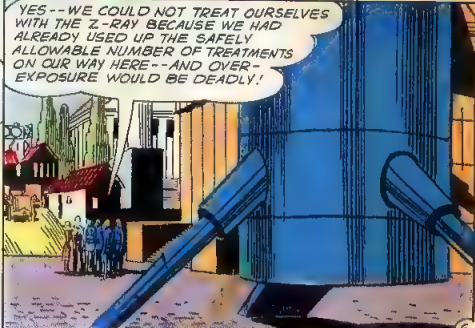
BUT THOSE WEAPONS DID WORK! WHAT MADE YOU IMMUNE TO THEM?

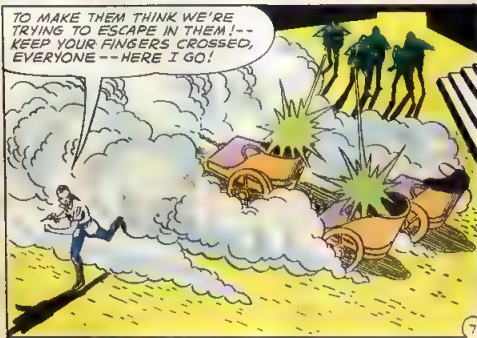
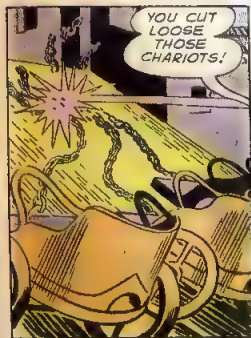
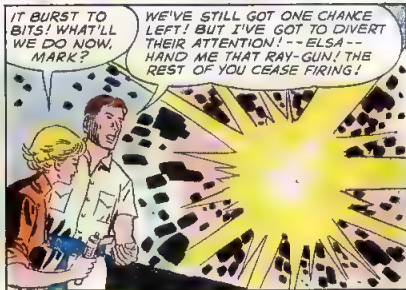
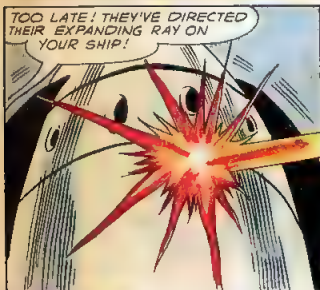
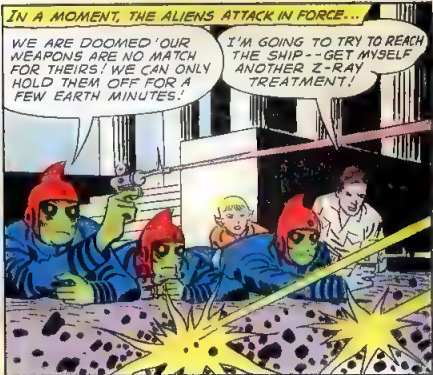
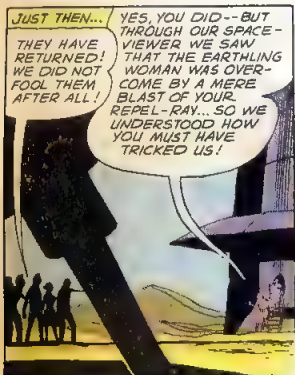


AN INVISIBLE ENERGY FIELD FOCUSED ON ME BY A Z-RAY LAMP IN THE SHIP OF THESE SLUVIAN SECURITY OFFICERS! THE PROTECTION'S ONLY TEMPORARY-- BUT IT CONVINCED THOSE ALIENS THAT EARTHLINGS ARE SUPER-BEINGS!



YES-- WE COULD NOT TREAT OURSELVES WITH THE Z-RAY BECAUSE WE HAD ALREADY USED UP THE SAFELY ALLOWABLE NUMBER OF TREATMENTS ON OUR WAY HERE-- AND OVER-EXPOSURE WOULD BE DEADLY!







HOUSE OF SECRETS



SCANT MINUTES LATER, A TERRIFIC ROAR IS FOLLOWED BY AN EARTH-SHUDDERING BLAST--

GREAT STARS! THE EARTH VOLCANO--IT IS ERUPTING!

LET US RETURN TO OUR SHIP AT ONCE!



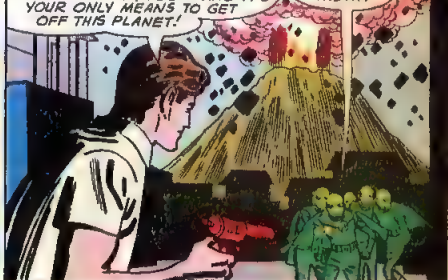
SEE--? THE EARTHLING BLOCKS OUR WAY!

FOOL! YOU CAN NO LONGER TRICK US WITH YOUR SUPPOSED IMMUNITY! STEP ASIDE-- YOUR RAY-GUN IS NO MATCH FOR OUR WEAPONS!



EXACTLY! BUT IF YOU FIRE, YOU'LL NOT ONLY DESTROY ME, BUT YOUR SHIP, TOO-- AND IT'S YOUR ONLY MEANS TO GET OFF THIS PLANET!

HE-- HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH!



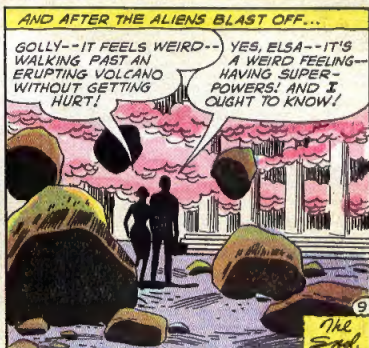
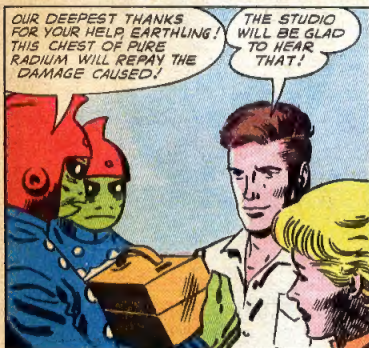
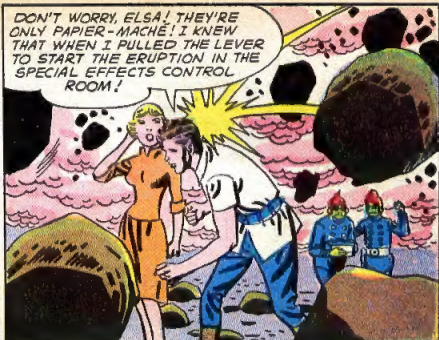
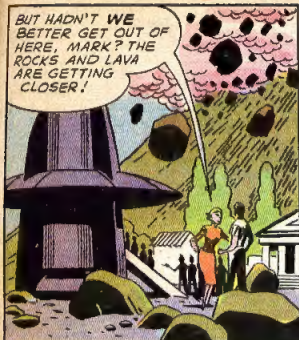
YOU BET I DO! NOW DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

WE-- WE HAD BETTER OBEY!



GOOD WORK, MARK!





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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
**"BATMAN BECOMES
BAT-BABY!"**

For the
sensational
answer,
Read the
LATEST
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BATMAN



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Science says you're wrong IF YOU BELIEVE THAT...

THE **SPACE** BETWEEN STARS IS A VACUUM...



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CONTAINING 100,000,000,000 STARS

INTERPLANETARY AND INTERSTELLAR SPACE CONTAIN ATOMS OF HYDROGEN, SODIUM, POTASSIUM, PLUS PROTONS AND FREE ELECTRONS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE SO THINLY SPREAD OUT THAT TWO SPACE-ATOMS COLLIDE ONLY ONCE A YEAR.

A NAUTICAL KNOT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A MILE...



IN SEAMANSHIP, A **KNOT** IS A MEASURE OF **SPEED**--NOT DISTANCE. IT IS EQUIVALENT TO ONE NAUTICAL MILE AN HOUR.

THE HUMAN HEART BEATS AT THE SAME RATE REGARDLESS OF AGE...

FRONT VIEW OF HEART

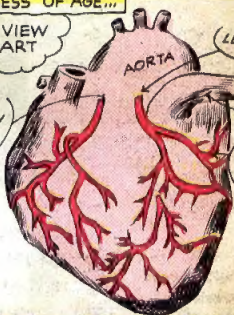
RIGHT CORONARY ARTERY

AORTA

LEFT CORONARY ARTERY

LEFT PULMONARY ARTERY

CIRCUMFLEX BRANCH



THE HEART OF THE AVERAGE MAN BEATS 72 TIMES A MINUTE; THE AVERAGE WOMAN 80 TIMES; THAT OF A NEWBORN BABY ABOUT TWICE AS FAST AS AN ADULT.

THE LOWEST TEMPERATURE EVER RECORDED ON EARTH WAS AT THE NORTH OR SOUTH POLE...



IN 1892, THE TEMPERATURE READING AT VERCHOYANSK, SIBERIA, WAS 90° BELOW ZERO--A WORLD'S RECORD. THE THERMOMETER MERCURY FROZE SOLID AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO LIGHT A MATCH.

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